A/60/21

United Nations

Committee on Information

Report on the twenty-seventh session (18 April-3 May 2005)

General Assembly
Official Records
Sixtieth Session
Supplement No. 21 (A/60/21)

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United Nations • New York, 2005

Note

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ISSN 0255-190X

[1 June 2005]

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Chapter I
Introduction

1. In its resolution 34/182 of 18 December 1979, the General Assembly decided to maintain the Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities, established by its resolution 33/115 C of 18 December 1978, which would be known as the Committee on Information, and to increase its membership from 41 to 66. In section I, paragraph 2, of resolution 34/182, the Assembly requested the Committee on Information:

> "(a) To continue to examine United Nations public information policies and activities, in the light of the evolution of international relations, particularly during the past two decades, and of the imperatives of the establishment of the new international economic order and of a new world information and communication order;
>
> "(b) To evaluate and follow up the efforts made and the progress achieved by the United Nations system in the field of information and communications;
>
> "(c) To promote the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order intended to strengthen peace and international understanding and based on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information and to make recommendations thereon to the General Assembly;"

and requested the Committee and the Secretary-General to report to it at its thirty-fifth session.

2. In its resolution 35/201 of 16 December 1980, the General Assembly expressed its satisfaction with the work of the Committee, approved its report and the recommendations of its Ad Hoc Working Group,[1] reaffirmed the mandate given to the Committee in its resolution 34/182 and decided to increase the membership of the Committee from 66 to 67. At its organizational session in 1980, the Committee agreed that the principle of geographical rotation would be applied to all the officers of the Committee and that they should be elected for two-year terms of office.

3. The General Assembly, from its thirty-sixth to fifty-eighth sessions, took note of the reports of the Committee and adopted consensus resolutions. At its fifty-ninth session, the Assembly took note of the report of the Committee[2] and adopted consensus resolutions 59/126 A and B of 10 December 2004.

4. Over the years, the membership of the Committee has grown. At its fifty-ninth session, the General Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), to increase the membership of the Committee from 102 to 107 and appointed Cape Verde, Iceland, Luxembourg, Madagascar and Qatar as members of the Committee.

5. The Committee is composed of the following Member States:

Algeria
Angola
Argentina
Armenia
Azerbaijan
Bangladesh
Belarus
Belgium
Belize
Benin

Brazil
Bulgaria
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cape Verde
Chile
China
Colombia
Congo
Costa Rica
Côte d'Ivoire
Croatia
Cuba
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Denmark
Ecuador
Egypt
El Salvador
Ethiopia
Finland
France
Gabon
Georgia
Germany
Ghana
Greece
Guatemala
Guinea
Guyana
Hungary
Iceland
India
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Jamaica
Japan
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Kenya
Lebanon
Liberia
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Luxembourg
Madagascar
Malta
Mexico
Monaco
Mongolia
Morocco
Mozambique
Nepal
Netherlands
Niger
Nigeria
Pakistan
Peru
Philippines
Poland
Portugal
Republic of Korea
Qatar
Republic of Moldova
Romania
Russian Federation
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Singapore
Slovakia
Solomon Islands
Somalia
South Africa
Spain
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Suriname
Switzerland
Syrian Arab Republic
Togo
Trinidad and Tobago
Tunisia
Turkey
Ukraine
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
United Republic of Tanzania
United States of America
Uruguay
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Viet Nam
Yemen
Zimbabwe

Chapter II
Organizational questions

A. Opening of the session

6. The organizational meeting of the twenty-seventh session of the Committee on Information was held on 18 April 2005 at United Nations Headquarters. The session was opened by the outgoing Chairman of the Committee, Ambassador Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury (Bangladesh).

B. Election of officers

7. In accordance with the principle of geographical rotation, the Committee held elections for a new Bureau for a two-year term. Upon his nomination by the representative of the Group of Eastern European States, Mihnea Ioan Motoc (Romania) was elected Chairman by acclamation. Upon their nomination by the representatives of the Group of African States, the Group of Western European and other States and the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States respectively, Souad Elalaoui (Morocco), Sebastião Filipe Coelho Ferreira (Portugal) and Marcelo Suárez Salvia (Argentina) were elected Vice-Chairpersons by acclamation. Upon his nomination by the representative of the Group of Asian States, Muhammad A. Muhith (Bangladesh) was elected Rapporteur, also by acclamation. The officers of the Committee on Information for the period 2005-2006 are thus as follows:

Chairman:
Mihnea Ioan Motoc (Romania)

Vice-Chairpersons:
Souad Elalaoui (Morocco)
Sebastião Filipe Coelho Ferreira (Portugal)
Marcelo Suárez Salvia (Argentina)

Rapporteur:
Muhammad A. Muhith (Bangladesh)

C. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work

8. At its organizational meeting, the Committee adopted the following agenda and programme of work (A/AC.198/2005/1):

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work.
4. Statement by the Chairman.
5. Admission of new members.
6. Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information.

7. General debate and consideration of reports submitted by the Secretary-General.

8. Open-ended working group of the Committee on Information.

9. Consideration and adoption of the report of the Committee to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session.

9. The Committee held the substantive meetings of its twenty-seventh session at United Nations Headquarters from 18 to 28 April 2005.

10. For its consideration of agenda item 7, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Progress report of the Secretary-General on the continuing reorientation of United Nations activities in the field of public information and communications (A/AC.198/2005/2);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on the further rationalization of the network of United Nations information centres (A/AC.198/2005/3);

(c) Report of the Secretary-General on the modernization and integrated management of United Nations libraries: new strategic directions (A/AC.198/2005/4);

(d) Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Communications Group in 2004 (A/AC.198/2005/5);

(e) Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations website: progress towards parity among official languages (A/AC.198/2005/6);

(f) Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the operation and management of United Nations libraries (A/59/373).

D. Observers

11. The following Member States took part in the session as observers: Austria, Bahamas, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Malaysia, Myanmar, Panama, Paraguay, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Uganda. The Holy See and Palestine also participated as observers.

12. Representatives of the following specialized agencies also participated as observers: the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organization.

Chapter III
General debate

13. Statements in the general debate were made by the following States members of the Committee on Information: Algeria, Angola, Argentina (on behalf of the Rio Group), Bangladesh, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Jamaica (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China), Japan, Luxembourg (on behalf of the European Union), Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Singapore, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Trinidad and Tobago (on behalf of the Caribbean Community), Tunisia, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America and Yemen. Statements were also made by two observers: Sao Tome and Principe (on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries — CPLP) and Palestine.

14. The general debate was preceded by statements made by the Chairman of the Committee and the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information.

15. In his opening statement, the Chairman of the Committee noted the significance of the session, which was occurring during the sixtieth anniversary of the Organization and at a time of change. He said the Secretary-General's reports presented for the consideration of the Committee clearly showed that effective reform and reorganization of the Department of Public Information had occurred. The Department was the voice through which the United Nations spoke, and the Committee could strengthen that voice by giving the Department the tools it needed, he said.

16. The Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, who introduced the reports of the Secretary-General, said that the Department had made measurable progress as a result of its reorientation, which had begun three years ago. With the exception of the regionalization of the United Nations information centres, the Department had implemented those aspects of the reform proposals that were within the authority of the Secretary-General or were based on existing General Assembly resolutions and guidance provided by the Committee on Information. It had devised a new mission statement and new operating model, and had reorganized itself to make better use of human and financial resources. The Department had also set up new mechanisms to be more responsive to clients and had reached out to the media and civil society through new technologies.

17. As a result of its reorientation efforts, the Department had established four clear strategic directions for its work:

- A client-oriented approach that joins the Department of Public Information and Secretariat departments as partners
- Integration of new information and communication technologies at all levels of work that increase productivity and speed up delivery of services
- United Nations system-wide coordination that promotes the collective use of vital resources
- Strengthened partnerships with civil society and public and private sectors that create a global outreach

A fifth element, which ran through each of the above, is the institutionalization of a culture of evaluation into the work of the Department.

18. In taking up the substantive questions before the Committee, speakers emphasized the central role of the United Nations in global affairs and of the Department of Public Information as its public voice. One speaker on behalf of a large group noted that the Department had an indispensable role in promoting a positive public image of the United Nations. The work of the Department in this area should continue to be carried out in all Member States, particularly in the media of the host country. Reiterating the importance of the Department's role in providing "accurate, impartial, comprehensive and timely information", the speaker urged that there be a consistent message between the Department and any other entities that provided public information material on the United Nations.

19. Another speaker, also representing a large group, commended the Department for its efforts to meet the various challenges it faced in 2004, and also for its efforts to develop a more strategic approach to promoting global awareness and greater understanding of the work of the United Nations in priority areas. In particular, the group welcomed the Department's approach to focus on key messages as part of a coordinated communications strategy.

20. Referring to the Department's role in promoting a positive public image of the United Nations, one speaker on behalf of a large group noted that the Department had to expend considerable resources to counter negative publicity in the media about the United Nations. While the Organization should not be shielded from justified criticism, it was regrettable that this type of publicity had overshadowed the other areas of work of the United Nations. "The United Nations is on many occasions not given due credit for its work", another speaker observed. One speaker, referring to the Organization's "mixed image", said that the Department had been countering the negative publicity "valiantly and creatively", but that there was no way for the Department to match the market reach of the conglomeration of modern media. He noted that Member States should recognize that the United Nations received a lot of criticism that it did not deserve, "owing either to wrong expectations being placed on it by the public at large, and often by Member States too, or to outright attacks against the United Nations".

21. Several speakers underscored the importance of the sixtieth anniversary of the Organization and the High-level Summit in September 2005. A speaker representing a large group underlined the importance of coordinated activities in connection with the Summit, which he felt should encompass strong support for and the widest possible cooperation with national public awareness campaigns conducted by Member States with a view to bringing to the people better knowledge of United Nations activities and achievements. Another speaker, also representing a large group, agreed with the observation of the Secretary-General that the celebration of the sixtieth anniversary would be a time of reflection and renewal, which presented the Department with an excellent opportunity to tell the United Nations story in a more dynamic way.

22. A number of speakers noted the importance they attached to the commemoration of World Press Freedom Day (3 May), which in 2005 would be observed outside the framework of the annual session of the Committee on Information. According to one speaker, a free press was fundamental for true democracy, and it was important to recall the affirmation in article 19 of the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights that "everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers". Another speaker emphasized that freedom of the press was closely linked to sustainable economic and social development, which was a valuable tool to ensure the exercise of fundamental rights and liberties. Another speaker representing a large group noted with concern that in many countries freedom of the press did not exist and that the dissemination of information remained controlled and limited. However, another speaker noted that information often "failed in its intrinsic duty" and was misused for "infringement of sovereignty".

23. Referring to reform in the Department of Public Information, a speaker noted that as a result of the reorientation process initiated in 2002, a transformed Department had emerged, which was serving the rest of the United Nations system well. Another speaker expressed satisfaction with the Department's new operating model and the further integration of new information and communication technologies into its global communication infrastructure. Another speaker described the Department as a "model department" that had shown an "exemplary ability to cater to the very varied needs of its clients".

24. Agreeing that the reorientation process of the Department was complete, one speaker suggested that the Department should continue to integrate the culture of evaluation into all its future plans and programmes and review the quality of its products and services. Another speaker on behalf of a large group stressed that self-evaluation and performance management were essential for the success of such a large and complex organization as the Department. The speaker, who pointed out that 80 per cent of the Department's target audiences had expressed satisfaction in terms of the usefulness, relevance and quality of its products, services and activities, encouraged the Department to further deepen the culture of evaluation in every aspect of its activities.

25. Several speakers referred to the growing digital divide between developed and developing countries and called for greater efforts by the international community and the Department of Public Information to close that gap. As a result of the widening gap, vast segments of the population in developing countries were not benefiting from the present information and communication technology revolution, another speaker noted. A number of speakers also referred to the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (Tunis, 16-18 November 2005). According to one speaker, who addressed the meeting on behalf of a large group, the outcome of this Summit should provide for specific initiatives to be taken at all levels to assist in bridging the digital divide, as well as place information and communication technologies in the service of development. The speaker urged the Department to continue to promote the Summit as an important international event.

26. Several speakers welcomed the Department's efforts to promote the "dialogue among civilizations and cultures" and commended the Department for launching its "unlearning intolerance" seminar series, which has so far included seminars on anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. According to one speaker, the seminar on anti-Semitism had been "a very good step towards a situation in which Jews everywhere feel that the United Nations is their home too". Another speaker asked the Department to explore different ways and means, including utilizing the potentials

and capacities of United Nations information centres in different regions and countries, to promote a culture of dialogue, respect and understanding among people. Another speaker spoke appreciatively of the annual seminar organized by the Department on the question of Palestine, which this year will take place in Cairo (13-14 June 2005).

27. Several speakers singled out the United Nations website as an important source of information about the Organization. One speaker described the United Nations website as "exceedingly effective, useful and well-organized". Another speaker, representing a large group, expressed support for the efforts made by the Department to strengthen the United Nations website in all official languages. Expressing the group's concern at the continuing disparity among the different official languages on the United Nations website, the speaker urged that all efforts be directed towards addressing this issue. Those efforts should conform with relevant General Assembly resolutions through the reallocation of resources and the deployment of staff to the required language posts, the speaker said. Several speakers also underscored the importance of providing information in local languages and commended the network of United Nations information centres for their efforts to develop websites that catered to the needs of local populations in developing countries.

28. Another speaker, also representing a large group, welcomed the Department's efforts to further attract website users through a redesign of the site's top-level pages, including database-driven features, for easy access to the latest developments. The speaker particularly welcomed the increasing compliance with the requirements for persons with disabilities. However, another speaker asked the Department to provide additional information on accessibility by persons with disabilities and on the status of the project to establish a United Nations portal. The speaker, while noting the growth in the overall number of pages viewed on the website, also asked the Department to provide a statistical analysis of the number of pages actually viewed, sorted by official language, and not just "percentage" increases in the number of pages viewed across language sites.

29. At the same time, several speakers called for the continuation of the use of traditional media, including radio and print, in disseminating the main messages of the United Nations. One speaker, noting the Department's continued progress towards strengthening partnerships with radio and television broadcasters, commended the Department for launching a new radio programme dedicated to Africa.

30. A number of speakers commented on the importance of closer coordination between the Department of Public Information and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Speaking on behalf of a large group, one speaker observed that such coordination was essential in ensuring the effectiveness of the information components in peacekeeping missions. This was of current relevance to the international community in the context of the surge in peacekeeping operations and the allegations of abuse and exploitation in peacekeeping missions. The speaker requested the Department of Public Information to provide specific information ensuring that the activities undertaken by the information components in peacekeeping missions were under the financial responsibility of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Another speaker felt that the peacekeepers' job was greatly facilitated when local communities were aware of the benefits a

peacekeeping operation brought to them. The Department of Public Information and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should fruitfully collaborate to ensure that the objectives of the peacekeeping operations were well known to the communities they were set up to secure, he said.

31. The new strategic directions taken by United Nations libraries were commented on by several speakers. One speaker, addressing the Committee on behalf of a large group, noted that any change in the methods of United Nations libraries should continue to respect the previously agreed mandate and General Assembly resolutions relevant to libraries, as well as be subject to prior intergovernmental discussion and agreement. The speaker also cautioned that the proposal to introduce technological innovations in the provision of library services should take into account the physical and other challenges faced by Member States in being able to effectively utilize such technology. Echoing the same view, another speaker noted that what made a library a living experience was the availability of printed material, including books, newspapers and other publications. The speaker hoped that United Nations libraries would not abandon their traditional role.

32. However, other speakers welcomed the proposed changes in library services and said that they supported the newly developed motto "from collections to connections". One speaker expressed confidence that the new model would enhance the important role librarians play, as they would be positioned to better assist their clients or partners in finding relevant, authoritative and up-to-date information.

33. A central focus of the general debate was the report of the Secretary-General on the further rationalization of the network of United Nations information centres. According to one speaker representing a large group, the report of the Secretary-General had provided an assessment of lessons learned from the proposed regional model. Based on this, the group endorsed the conclusion that no further regionalization was possible. The speaker reiterated the group's view that the presence of United Nations information centres in developing countries, in particular the least developing countries, strengthened the flow of information in these countries and assisted in addressing the disparities faced by them in the areas of access to information and information technology. The speaker, underlining the view of the group, stressed that any proposal for the further rationalization of the network of those centres must be in close consultation with the host countries, other countries served by the information centres and the regions involved, and must take into account the geographical, linguistic and technological characteristics of different regions. In addition, adequate resources should be allocated so as to ensure the effective functioning and strengthening of United Nations information centres in developing countries.

34. Another speaker, also representing a large group, expressed the hope that the new report of the Secretary-General was not a preparatory measure to resume the rationalization process or the closure of United Nations information centres. "The regionalization process is over", the speaker observed. Another speaker, expressing support for the proposal that Governments provide rent-free premises or rent-subsidized premises, underlined that any proposal for further rationalization, which could include the closure of United Nations information centres in the event these conditions could not be met, "must necessarily be in consultation with the host countries, other countries served by these information centres and regions involved, taking into account the distinct characteristics of each region".

35. Presenting a different view on the process of rationalization of United Nations information centres, one speaker representing a large group reiterated that the policy of the European Union with regard to the regionalization of United Nations information centres had not changed. The group members accepted the argument that the pursuit of regionalization must be tailored to the circumstances in each region and that the Western European model would not be applicable to all regions. They also agreed that there could be "a certain advantage in taking a more gradual approach on this subject for the time being". However, a gradual approach "must not mean a static one", the speaker said. The countries in Western Europe had agreed to close down centres in their capitals on the understanding that other Member States would also take a similar decision in their own countries if circumstances warranted it. Restating their commitment to regionalization, the speaker asked the Secretariat to "use fully the authority they have in making executive decisions on where best to focus their efforts" and advised them to make "bold proposals" for the approval of the General Assembly.

36. Another speaker, who commended the Department for taking steps with a view to strengthening the centres' operations, argued that for a variety of reasons, the information centre system continued to need further rationalization. He said he was not convinced that the regionalization/rationalization process would have continued to move forward to the extent necessary to effect real change even if the United Nations information centre budget had not been cut. The speaker reminded the Committee that the decision to reduce the budgetary allocation to United Nations information centres had been "willingly agreed by all".

37. Another speaker argued that the rationalization process should not automatically be understood as a reduction in the number of centres, but rather as an improvement to promote a more systematic and effective flow of information and more active outreach activities. The priorities of rationalization should be determined primarily on the basis of demand for the services provided by United Nations information centres and the availability of alternative means of access to United Nations information services. The speaker reminded the Committee that currently about one fourth of United Nations Member States were outside of the scope of the Department's field information capacity and hoped that the rationalization of United Nations information centres would proceed in such a way as to strengthen the Organization's information outreach to those Member States currently remaining outside of the scope.

38. The Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information provided an in-depth response to a wide range of questions raised by delegations during the general debate, on 20 April 2005.

39. In a statement made at the final meeting of the Committee on 3 May 2005, a delegate speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China reaffirmed the Group's position in relation to the rationalization of United Nations information centres and observed that it was the understanding of the Group that rationalization meant improving the effectiveness and efficiency of United Nations information centres and activities of the Department of Public Information. It was also the understanding of the Group that given the importance of United Nations information centres in developing countries and their core responsibility in transmitting the message of the United Nations, any improvements in the context of rationalization would not be to the detriment of the existing United Nations information centres worldwide. The Group requested that this statement be reflected in the official records of the Committee on Information.

Chapter IV

Preparation and adoption of the report of the Committee to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session

40. At its fifth plenary meeting, the Committee proceeded to adopt by consensus the draft report, including the following two draft resolutions and draft decision:

Draft resolution A
Information in the service of humanity

The General Assembly,

Taking note of the comprehensive and important report of the Committee on Information,[3]

Also taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on questions relating to information,[4]

Urges all countries, organizations of the United Nations system as a whole and all others concerned, reaffirming their commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and to the principles of freedom of the press and freedom of information, as well as to those of the independence, pluralism and diversity of the media, deeply concerned by the disparities existing between developed and developing countries and the consequences of every kind arising from those disparities that affect the capability of the public, private or other media and individuals in developing countries to disseminate information and communicate their views and their cultural and ethical values through endogenous cultural production, as well as to ensure the diversity of sources and their free access to information, and recognizing the call in this context for what in the United Nations and at various international forums has been termed "a new world information and communication order, seen as an evolving and continuous process":

(a) To cooperate and interact with a view to reducing existing disparities in information flows at all levels by increasing assistance for the development of communication infrastructures and capabilities in developing countries, with due regard for their needs and the priorities attached to such areas by those countries, and in order to enable them and the public, private or other media in developing countries to develop their own information and communication policies freely and independently and increase the participation of media and individuals in the communication process, and to ensure a free flow of information at all levels;

(b) To ensure for journalists the free and effective performance of their professional tasks and condemn resolutely all attacks against them;

(c) To provide support for the continuation and strengthening of practical training programmes for broadcasters and journalists from public, private and other media in developing countries;

(d) To enhance regional efforts and cooperation among developing countries, as well as cooperation between developed and developing countries, to strengthen communication capacities and to improve the media infrastructure and communication technology in the developing countries, especially in the areas of training and dissemination of information;

(e) To aim at, in addition to bilateral cooperation, providing all possible support and assistance to the developing countries and their media, public, private or other, with due regard to their interests and needs in the field of information and to action already adopted within the United Nations system, including:

(i) The development of the human and technical resources that are indispensable for the improvement of information and communication systems in developing countries and support for the continuation and strengthening of practical training programmes, such as those already operating under both public and private auspices throughout the developing world;

(ii) The creation of conditions that will enable developing countries and their media, public, private or other, to have, by using their national and regional resources, the communication technology suited to their national needs, as well as the necessary programme material, especially for radio and television broadcasting;

(iii) Assistance in establishing and promoting telecommunication links at the subregional, regional and interregional levels, especially among developing countries;

(iv) The facilitation, as appropriate, of access by the developing countries to advanced communication technology available on the open market;

(f) To provide full support for the International Programme for the Development of Communication[5] of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which should support both public and private media.

Draft resolution B
United Nations public information policies and activities

The General Assembly,

Emphasizing the role of the Committee on Information as its main subsidiary body mandated to make recommendations to it relating to the work of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat,

Reaffirming General Assembly resolution 13 (I) of 13 February 1946, establishing the Department, which states in paragraph 2 of annex I that "the activities of the Department should be so organized and directed as to promote to the greatest possible extent an informed understanding of the work and purposes of the United Nations among the peoples of the world",

Concurring with the view of the Secretary-General that the contents of public information and communications should be placed at the heart of the strategic management of the United Nations and that a culture of communications should permeate all levels of the Organization, as a means of fully informing the peoples of the world of the aims and activities of the United Nations, in accordance with the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, in order to create broad-based global support for the United Nations,

Stressing that the primary mission of the Department of Public Information is to provide, through its outreach activities, accurate, impartial, comprehensive and timely information to the public on the tasks and responsibilities of the United

Nations in order to strengthen international support for the activities of the Organization with the greatest transparency,

Recalling that the comprehensive review of the work of the Department of Public Information, requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 56/253 of 24 December 2001, and the implementation of its second phase, described in the report of the Secretary-General on reorientation of United Nations activities in the field of public information and communications to the Committee on Information at its twenty-fifth session,[6] as well as the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change",[7] and Assembly resolutions 57/300 of 20 December 2002 and 59/126 B of 10 December 2004, as they apply to the Department of Public Information, providing an opportunity to take due steps to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department and to maximize the use of its resources,

Expressing its concern that the gap in the information and communication technologies between the developed and the developing countries has continued to widen and that vast segments of the population in developing countries are not benefiting from the present information and technology revolution, and, in this regard, underlining the necessity of rectifying the imbalances of the global information and technology revolution in order to make it more just, equitable and effective,

Recognizing that developments in the information and communication technology revolution open vast new opportunities for economic growth and social development and can play an important role in the eradication of poverty in developing countries, and, at the same time, emphasizing that the revolution also poses challenges and risks and could lead to the further widening of disparities between and within countries,

Recalling its resolution 56/262 of 15 February 2002 on multilingualism, and emphasizing the importance of making appropriate use of the official languages of the United Nations in the activities of the Department of Public Information, aiming to eliminate the disparity between the use of English and the five other official languages,

Welcoming Cape Verde, Iceland, Luxembourg, Madagascar and Qatar to membership in the Committee on Information,

I. Introduction

1. *Reaffirms* its resolution 13 (I), in which it established the Department of Public Information, and all other relevant General Assembly resolutions related to the activities of the Department, and requests the Secretary-General, in respect of the public information policies and activities of the United Nations, to continue to implement fully the recommendations contained in paragraph 2 of its resolution 48/44 B of 10 December 1993 and other mandates as established by the General Assembly;

2. *Also reaffirms* that the United Nations remains the indispensable foundation of a peaceful and just world and that its voice must be heard in a clear and effective manner, and emphasizes the essential role of the Department of Public Information in this context, the activities of which should be so organized and

directed as to promote to the greatest possible extent an informed understanding of the work and purposes of the United Nations among the peoples of the world;

3. *Stresses* the importance of the clear and timely provision of information by the Secretariat to Member States, upon their request, within the framework of existing mandates and procedures;

4. *Reaffirms* the central role of the Committee on Information in United Nations public information policies and activities, including the prioritization of those activities, and decides that recommendations relating to the programme of the Department of Public Information originate, to the extent possible, and are considered in the Committee;

5. *Requests* the Department of Public Information, following the priorities laid down by the General Assembly in its resolution 59/275 of 23 December 2004, and guided by the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[8] to pay particular attention to such major issues as the eradication of poverty, conflict prevention, sustainable development, human rights, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and the needs of the African continent;

6. *Also requests* the Department of Public Information to pay particular attention to progress in implementing the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and the outcomes of the major related United Nations summits and conferences in carrying out its activities;

7. *Reaffirms* the need to enhance the technological infrastructure of the Department of Public Information on a continuous basis in order to widen its outreach and improve the United Nations website;

8. *Recognizes* the important work carried out by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and its collaboration with news agencies and broadcasting organizations in developing countries in disseminating information on priority issues, and encourages a continued collaboration between the Department of Public Information and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the promotion of culture and in the fields of education and communication;

II. General activities of the Department of Public Information

9. *Notes* the proposals of the Secretary-General to improve the effective and targeted delivery of public information activities, emphasizes that these proposals should be in accordance with the relevant resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly, and requests the Secretary-General to report thereon to the Committee on Information at its twenty-eighth session;

10. *Acknowledges* that the Department of Public Information has entered the third and final year of its collaborative project with the Office of Internal Oversight Services to systematically evaluate public information products and activities, and requests the Secretary-General to report on the final outcome of the project to the Committee on Information at its twenty-eighth session;

11. *Requests* the Department of Public Information, in this regard, to continue to evaluate its products and activities with the objective of improving their effectiveness, including through interdepartmental consultations;

12. *Reaffirms* that the Department of Public Information is the focal point for information policies of the United Nations and the primary news centre for information about the United Nations, its activities and those of the Secretary-General;

13. *Also reaffirms* the importance of better coordination between the Department of Public Information and the Office of the Spokesman for the Secretary-General, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure consistency in the messages of the Organization;

14. *Further reaffirms* that the Department of Public Information must prioritize its work programme while respecting existing mandates and in line with regulation 5.6 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation,[9] to focus its message and concentrate its efforts better and, as a function of performance management, to match its programmes with the needs of its target audiences, on the basis of improved feedback and evaluation mechanisms;

15. *Notes with appreciation* the efforts of the Department of Public Information to publicize the work and decisions of the General Assembly, encourages the Department to further strengthen its working relationship with the Office of the President of the General Assembly, and requests the Secretary-General to report thereon to the Committee on Information at its twenty-eighth session;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to exert all efforts to ensure that publications and other information services of the Secretariat, including the United Nations website and the United Nations News Service, contain comprehensive, objective and equitable information about the issues before the Organization and that they maintain editorial independence, impartiality, accuracy and full consistency with resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly;

17. *Encourages* the Department of Public Information to continue to coordinate closely with all other departments of the Secretariat, to avoid duplication in the issuance of United Nations publications and to ensure that they are produced in a cost-effective manner;

18. *Emphasizes* that the Department of Public Information should maintain and improve its activities in the areas of special interest to developing countries and, where appropriate, other countries with special needs, and that the Department's activities should contribute to bridging the existing gap between the developing and the developed countries in the crucial field of public information and communications;

19. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to continue to strengthen the coordination between the Department of Public Information and other departments of the Secretariat in the context of its client-oriented approach and to identify target audiences and develop information programmes and media strategies for priority issues, and emphasizes that public information capacities and activities in other departments should function under the guidance of the Department;

20. *Welcomes* the initiatives that have been taken by the Department of Public Information to strengthen the public information system of the United Nations, and, in this regard, stresses the importance of the coherent and results-

oriented approach being taken by the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the programmes and funds of the United Nations system involved in public information activities and the provision of resources for their implementation, and that feedback from Member States on the relevance and effectiveness of programme delivery should be taken into account;

21. *Notes with appreciation* the continued efforts of the Department of Public Information in issuing daily press releases, and requests the Department to continue providing this invaluable service to both Member States and representatives of the media, while considering possible means of improving their production process and streamlining their format, structure and length, keeping in mind the views of Member States;

22. *Also notes with appreciation* the efforts of the Department of Public Information to work at the local level with other organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to enhance the coordination of their communication activities, and requests the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its twenty-eighth session on progress achieved in this regard and on the activities of the United Nations Communications Group;

23. *Calls upon* the Department of Public Information to continue to examine its policies and activities regarding the durable preservation of its radio, television and photographic archives, to take action, within existing resources, to ensure that such archives are preserved and are accessible and to report to the Committee on Information at its twenty-eighth session;

Multilingualism and public information

24. *Emphasizes* the importance of making appropriate use of all the official languages of the United Nations in all the activities of the Department of Public Information, with the aim of eliminating the disparity between the use of English and the five other official languages;

25. *Welcomes* the ongoing efforts of the Department of Public Information to enhance multilingualism in its activities, and encourages the Department to continue its endeavours in this regard;

26. *Emphasizes* the importance of ensuring the full, equitable treatment of all the official languages of the United Nations in all activities of the Department of Public Information, and, in this regard, reaffirms its request to the Secretary-General to ensure that the Department of Public Information has appropriate staffing capacity in all official languages of the United Nations to undertake all its activities;

27. *Stresses* the importance of fully implementing its resolution 52/214 of 22 December 1997, in section C of which it requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the texts of all new public documents in all six official languages and information materials of the United Nations are made available daily through the United Nations website and are accessible to Member States without delay;

28. *Reiterates* paragraph 4, section C, of its resolution 52/214, and requests the Secretary-General to continue towards completion of the task of uploading all important older United Nations documents on the United Nations website in all six official languages on a priority basis, so that these archives are also available to Member States through that medium;

29. *Reaffirms* that it is important that the Secretary-General include in future programme budget proposals for the Department of Public Information the importance of using all six official languages in its activities;

30. *Takes note with appreciation* of the work done by the network of United Nations information centres in favour of the publication of United Nations information materials and the translation of important documents in languages other than United Nations official languages, with a view to reaching the widest possible spectrum of audiences and extending the United Nations message to all the corners of the world in order to strengthen international support for the activities of the Organization;

Bridging the digital divide

31. *Notes with satisfaction* the adoption of the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action[10] at the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, which was held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003, and welcomes the holding of the second phase of the Summit from 16 to 18 November 2005 in Tunis;

32. *Calls upon* the Department of Public Information to contribute to raising the awareness of the international community of the importance of the World Summit on the Information Society and the need to join efforts to make it a success;

33. *Recalls* paragraph 32 of its resolution 59/126 B, and welcomes the contribution of the Department of Public Information in publicizing the efforts of the Secretary-General to close the digital divide as a means of spurring economic growth and as a response to the continuing gap between developed and developing countries, and, in this context, requests the Department to further enhance its role;

Network of United Nations information centres

34. *Emphasizes* the importance of the network of United Nations information centres in enhancing the public image of the United Nations and in disseminating messages on the United Nations to local populations, especially in developing countries;

35. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on further rationalization of the network of United Nations information centres,[11] and, in this regard, recognizes the constraints of further regionalization as described in paragraph 25 of the Secretary-General's report;

36. *Stresses* the importance of rationalizing the network of United Nations information centres, and, in this regard, requests the Secretary-General to continue to make proposals in this direction, including through the redeployment of resources where necessary, and to report to the Committee on Information at its twenty-eighth session;

37. *Reaffirms* that rationalization of United Nations information centres must be carried out on a case-by-case basis in consultation with all concerned Member States in which existing information centres are located, the countries served by those information centres and other interested countries in the region, taking into consideration the distinctive characteristics of each region;

38. *Recognizes* that the network of United Nations information centres, especially in developing countries, should continue to enhance its impact and

activities, including through strategic communications support, and calls upon the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of this approach to the Committee on Information at its twenty-eighth session;

39. *Stresses* the importance of taking into account the special needs and requirements of developing countries in the field of information and communications technology for the effective flow of information in those countries;

40. *Also stresses* that the Department of Public Information, through its network of United Nations information centres, should continue to promote public awareness of and mobilize support for the work of the United Nations at the local level, bearing in mind that information in local languages has the strongest impact on local populations;

41. *Further stresses* the importance of efforts to strengthen the outreach activities of the United Nations to those Member States remaining outside the network of United Nations information centres, and encourages the Secretary-General, within the context of rationalization, to extend the services of the network of United Nations information centres to those Member States;

42. *Stresses* that the Department of Public Information should continue to review the allocation of both staff and financial resources to the United Nations information centres in developing countries, emphasizing the needs of the least developed countries;

43. *Encourages* the network of United Nations information centres to continue to develop web pages in local languages, also encourages the Department of Public Information to provide resources and technical facilities, in particular to those information centres whose web pages are not yet operational, and further encourages host countries to respond to the needs of the information centres;

44. *Takes note* of the proposal by the Secretary-General to work closely with the Governments concerned to explore the possibility of identifying rent-free premises, while taking into account the economic condition of the host countries and bearing in mind that such support should not be a substitute for the full allocation of financial resources for the information centres in the context of the programme budget of the United Nations;

45. *Also takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General containing the discussion regarding the creation of a United Nations information centre in Luanda[12] to address the special needs of Portuguese-speaking African countries, welcomes the offer made by the Government of Angola to host the centre as part of the network of United Nations information centres by providing rent-free premises, and encourages the Secretary-General, within the context of rationalization, to take all necessary measures to accommodate those needs;

III. Strategic communications services

46. *Notes* paragraph 19 of the report of the Secretary-General on the continuing reorientation of United Nations activities in the field of public information and communications,[13] and, in this context, reaffirms that the Department of Public Information is the principal department responsible for the implementation of information strategies, as mandated;

47. *Reaffirms* the role of the strategic communications services in devising and disseminating United Nations messages by developing communications strategies, in close collaboration with the substantive departments, United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies, in full compliance with the legislative mandates;

Promotional campaigns

48. *Recognizes* that promotional campaigns aimed at supporting special sessions and international conferences of the United Nations are part of the core responsibility of the Department of Public Information, welcomes the efforts of the Department to examine creative ways in which it can organize and implement these campaigns in partnership with the substantive departments concerned, using the United Nations Millennium Declaration[8] as its guide, and requests the Department of Public Information to pay particular attention to progress in implementing the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and the outcomes of the major related United Nations summits and conferences in carrying out its activities;

49. *Appreciates* the work of the Department of Public Information in promoting, through its campaigns, issues of importance to the international community, such as sustainable development, strategic coordination in humanitarian relief, especially in natural disasters and other crises, children, HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases and decolonization, as well as the dialogue among civilizations, culture of peace and tolerance and the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, and encourages the Department, in cooperation with the countries concerned and with the relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, to continue to take appropriate measures to enhance world public awareness of these and other important global issues;

50. *Welcomes* the new initiative of the Department of Public Information entitled "Ten Stories the World Should Hear More About";

51. *Encourages* the Department of Public Information to continue to work within the United Nations Communications Group to coordinate the preparation and implementation of communication strategies with the heads of information of the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, and requests the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at successive sessions on the activities of the Group;

52. *Stresses* the need for the renewed emphasis in support of Africa's development, in particular by the Department of Public Information, in order to promote awareness in the international community of the nature of the critical economic and social situation in Africa and of the priorities of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;[14]

Role of the Department of Public Information in United Nations peacekeeping

53. *Commends* the efforts of the Secretary-General to strengthen the public information capacity of the Department of Public Information for the establishment and functioning of the information components of United Nations peacekeeping operations and of political and peacebuilding missions, including its promotional efforts and other information support activities, and requests the Secretariat to

continue to ensure the involvement of the Department from the planning stage of future operations through interdepartmental consultations and coordination with other departments of the Secretariat, in particular with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations;

54. *Stresses* the importance of enhancing the public information capacity of the Department of Public Information in the field of peacekeeping operations and its role in the selection process of spokespersons for United Nations peacekeeping operations or missions, and, in this regard, encourages the Department to second spokespersons who have the necessary skills to fulfil the tasks of the operations or missions, taking into account the principle of equitable geographical distribution in accordance with Chapter XV, Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, and to consider views expressed, especially by host countries, when appropriate, in this regard;

55. *Welcomes* the actions taken by the Department of Public Information to increase its involvement in the planning stage of new or expanding peacekeeping operations, as well as the deployment of public information components in new missions, also welcomes the improvements made to the peacekeeping portal on the United Nations website, and encourages the Department of Public Information to continue its efforts in supporting the peacekeeping missions to further develop their websites;

56. *Encourages* the Department of Public Information and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to continue their cooperation in raising awareness of the new realities, successes and challenges faced by peacekeeping operations, especially multidimensional and complex ones, and of the recent surge in United Nations peacekeeping activities, and welcomes efforts by the two Departments to develop and implement a comprehensive communications strategy on current challenges facing United Nations peacekeeping;

57. *Also encourages* the Department of Public Information and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to cooperate in establishing an effective outreach programme to explain the policy of the Organization against sexual exploitation and abuse;

58. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to report to the Committee on Information at its successive sessions on the role of the Department of Public Information in United Nations peacekeeping operations;

Role of the Department of Public Information in strengthening dialogue among civilizations and the culture of peace as means of enhancing understanding among nations

59. *Recalls* its resolutions 53/22 of 4 November 1998 and 55/23 of 13 November 2000 on the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, 52/15 of 20 November 1997, by which it proclaimed 2000 the International Year for the Culture of Peace, 53/25 of 10 November 1998, by which it proclaimed the period 2001-2010 the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 56/6 of 9 November 2001 on the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations, and 59/142 of 15 December 2004 on the promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation, encourages the Department of Public Information to continue to provide the necessary support for

the dissemination of information pertaining to dialogue among civilizations and the culture of peace and to take due steps in fostering the culture of dialogue among civilizations via all mass media, such as the Internet, print, radio and television, and requests the Secretary-General to submit a report in this regard to the Committee on Information at its successive sessions;

IV. News services

60. *Stresses* that the central objective of the news services implemented by the Department of Public Information is the timely delivery of accurate, objective and balanced news and information emanating from the United Nations system in all four mass media — print, radio, television and Internet — to the media and other audiences worldwide, with the overall emphasis on multilingualism, and reiterates its request to the Department to ensure that all news-breaking stories and news alerts are accurate, impartial and free of bias;

Traditional means of communication

61. *Also stresses* that radio remains one of the most cost-effective and far-reaching traditional media available to the Department of Public Information and an important instrument in United Nations activities, including development and peacekeeping, with a view to achieving a broad client base around the world;

62. *Notes* that the international radio broadcasting capacity for the United Nations is an integral part of the activities of the Department of Public Information, and requests the Secretary-General to make every effort to ensure its success and to report on its activities to the Committee on Information at its twenty-eighth session;

63. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to achieve parity in the six official languages in United Nations Radio production;

64. *Notes* the efforts being made by the Department of Public Information to disseminate programmes directly to broadcasting stations all over the world in the six official languages, with the addition of Portuguese, as well as in other languages where possible, and, in this regard, stresses the need for impartiality and objectivity concerning information activities of the United Nations;

65. *Encourages* the Department of Public Information to continue building partnerships with local, national and regional broadcasters to extend the United Nations message to all the corners of the world in an accurate and impartial way, and also encourages the Radio and Television Service of the Department to continue to take full advantage of the technological infrastructure made available in recent years;

United Nations website

66. *Reaffirms* that the United Nations website remains a very useful tool for the media, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, Member States and the general public, and, in this regard, reiterates its appreciation for the efforts of the Department of Public Information in creating and maintaining it;

67. *Recognizes* the efforts made by the Department of Public Information to implement the basic accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities to the United Nations website, calls upon the Department to continue to work towards

compliance with all levels of accessibility requirements on all pages of the website with the aim of ensuring its accessibility by persons with different kinds of disabilities, and requests the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its twenty-eighth session on progress made in this regard;

68. *Reaffirms* the need to achieve full parity among the six official languages on United Nations websites while noting with concern the increasing gap among different official languages on United Nations websites;

69. *Takes note* of the fact that the multilingual development and enrichment of the United Nations website has improved, although at a slower rate than expected owing to several constraints that need to be addressed, and, in this regard, requests the Department of Public Information, in coordination with content-providing offices, to improve the actions undertaken to achieve parity among the six official languages on the United Nations website;

70. *Welcomes* the cooperative arrangements undertaken by the Department of Public Information with academic institutions to increase the number of web pages available in some official languages, and encourages the Secretary-General to explore additional ways to further extend these cooperative arrangements to include all the official languages of the United Nations;

71. *Stresses* the need to adopt a decision on the multilingual development, maintenance and enrichment of the United Nations website, and requests the Secretary-General to submit proposals to establish separate language units for each of the six official languages within the Department of Public Information, in order to achieve full parity among the official languages of the United Nations;

72. *Reaffirms* paragraph 2 of part IX of its resolution 59/276 of 23 December 2004 on proposals to strengthen the United Nations website;

73. *Reaffirms* its request to the Secretary-General to ensure, until such a decision has been taken and implemented and while maintaining an up-to-date and accurate website, the adequate distribution of financial and human resources within the Department of Public Information allocated to the United Nations website among all official languages, taking into consideration the specificity of each official language on a continuous basis;

74. *Takes note* of the proposal of the Secretary-General to translate all English language materials and databases posted on the United Nations websites by the respective content-providing offices of the Secretariat into all official languages,[15] and reiterates its request to the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its twenty-eighth session on the most practical, efficient and cost-effective means of implementing this proposal;

75. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to continue to take full advantage of recent developments in information technology in order to improve, in a cost-effective manner, the expeditious dissemination of information on the United Nations, in accordance with the priorities established by the General Assembly resolutions and taking into account the linguistic diversity of the Organization;

76. *Recognizes* that some official languages use non-Latin and bidirectional scripts and that technological infrastructures and supportive applications in the United Nations are based on Latin script, which leads to difficulties in processing non-Latin and bidirectional scripts, and requests the Department of Public

Information, in cooperation with the Information Technology Services Division of the Department of Management, to continue its efforts to ensure that technological infrastructures and supportive applications in the United Nations fully support Latin, non-Latin and bidirectional scripts in order to enhance the equality of all official languages on the United Nations website;

77. *Notes with satisfaction* that access to the Official Document System of the United Nations, which is now being provided free to the public through its integration with the United Nations website, has resulted in a significant enhancement of the multilingual nature of the website owing to the availability of United Nations parliamentary documentation in the six official languages;

78. *Also notes with satisfaction* that United Nations webcast services provide live video of United Nations meetings and events, and encourages the Department of Public Information to also make the webcast available in the original language in which it is delivered;

79. *Welcomes* the electronic mail-based United Nations News Service, distributed worldwide in the English and French languages through e-mail by the Department of Public Information, and requests the Department as a matter of priority to continue to examine ways to provide this service in all official languages;

80. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to work within the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and other appropriate inter-agency bodies to establish a United Nations gateway, an inter-agency search facility in which all United Nations system entities should be encouraged to participate, and requests the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its successive sessions on the activities of the High-level Committee on Management in this regard;

V. Library services

81. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Secretary-General on the modernization and integrated management of United Nations libraries: new strategic directions;[16]

82. *Calls upon* the Department of Public Information to continue to lead the Steering Committee for the Modernization and Integrated Management of United Nations Libraries, and encourages the member libraries of the Steering Committee to coordinate closely and to establish time frames for the fulfilment of its programme of work;

83. *Takes note* of the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the review of the operations and management of United Nations libraries,[17] requests the Steering Committee to pursue new strategies for the work of United Nations libraries, which should aim at enhancing the effectiveness of libraries within existing legislative mandates, and requests the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its twenty-eighth session;

84. *Also takes note* of the steps taken by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and the other member libraries of the Steering Committee to align their activities, services and outputs more closely with the goals, objectives and operational priorities of the Organization;

85. *Reiterates* the need to enable the provision of hard copies of library materials to Member States, and notes the efforts of the Secretary-General to enrich, on a multilingual basis, the stock of books and journals in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, including publications on peace and security and development-related issues, in order to ensure that the Library is enriched and continues to be a broadly accessible resource for information about the United Nations and its activities;

86. *Recognizes* the importance of the depository libraries in disseminating information and knowledge about United Nations activities, and, in this connection, urges the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, in its capacity as the focal point, to continue to take the initiatives necessary to strengthen such libraries by providing regional training and other assistance and by improving their role with the aim of strengthening their support to users in developing countries;

87. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its twenty-eighth session on the activities of the Steering Committee and the work of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, including on the application of measures to enhance the effectiveness of the libraries within existing legislative mandates;

88. *Acknowledges* that the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, as part of the Outreach Division of the Department of Public Information, endeavours to facilitate access to timely and up-to-date library products and services for use by delegates, permanent missions of Member States, the Secretariat, researchers and depository libraries worldwide;

89. *Notes* the holding of training courses conducted by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library for the representatives of Member States and Secretariat staff on the use of Cyberseek, web search, the Intranet, United Nations documentation, United Nations Info Quest and the Official Document System of the United Nations;

90. *Recalls* paragraph 44 of its resolution 56/64 B of 24 December 2001, in which it welcomed the role of the Department of Public Information in fostering increased collaboration among libraries of the United Nations system;

VI. Outreach services

91. *Acknowledges* that the outreach services implemented by the Department of Public Information continue to work towards promoting awareness of the role and work of the United Nations on the priority issues;

92. *Notes* the importance of the continued implementation by the Department of Public Information of the ongoing programme for broadcasters and journalists from developing countries and countries with economies in transition, as mandated by the General Assembly, and encourages the Department to consider how best to maximize the benefits derived from the programme by reviewing, inter alia, its duration and the number of its participants;

93. *Welcomes* the movement towards educational outreach and the orientation of the *UN Chronicle*, both print and online editions, and, to this end, encourages the *UN Chronicle* to continue to develop co-publishing partnerships, collaborative educational activities and events, including the *Unlearning Intolerance* seminar series, with civil society organizations and institutions of higher learning;

94. *Reaffirms* the important role that guided tours play as a means of reaching out to the general public, including children and students at all levels;

95. *Welcomes* the efforts undertaken by the Department of Public Information in organizing exhibitions on important United Nations-related issues within existing mandates at United Nations Headquarters and at other United Nations offices as a useful tool for reaching out to the general public;

96. *Requests* the Department of Public Information to strengthen its role as a focal point for two-way interaction with civil society relating to the priorities and concerns of the Organization;

97. *Commends* the United Nations Correspondents Association on its Dag Hammarskjöld Memorial Scholarship Fund, which sponsors journalists from developing countries to come to the United Nations Headquarters and report on the activities during the General Assembly, and urges donors to extend financial support to the Fund so that it may increase the number of such scholarships to journalists in this context;

98. *Expresses its appreciation* for the efforts and contribution of United Nations Messengers of Peace, Goodwill Ambassadors and other advocates to promote the work of the United Nations and to enhance international public awareness of its priorities and concerns, and calls upon the Department of Public Information to continue to involve them in its communications and media strategies and outreach activities;

99. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its next session on the activities being carried out by the Department of Public Information to enhance the public image of the Organization, especially where there is a component of the network of United Nation information centres;

VII. Final remarks

100. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that all reports requested by the Committee on Information are submitted and issued in accordance with the legislative mandate;

101. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its twenty-eighth session and to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session on the activities of the Department of Public Information and on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the present resolution;

102. *Requests* the Committee on Information to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session;

103. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-first session the item entitled "Questions relating to information".

Draft decision
Increase in the membership of the Committee on Information

The General Assembly decides to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 107 to 108 and to appoint Austria as a member of the Committee on Information.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/35/21), annex, sect. V.

[2] Ibid., *Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/59/21).

[3] To be issued as *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixtieth Session, Supplement No. 21* (A/60/21).

[4] A/60/__.

[5] See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Twenty-first Session, Belgrade, 23 September-28 October 1980*, vol. 1, *Resolutions*, sect. III.4, resolution 4/21.

[6] A/AC.198/2003/2.

[7] A/57/387 and Corr.1.

[8] See resolution 55/2.

[9] ST/SGB/2000/8.

[10] See A/C.2/59/3.

[11] A/AC.198/2005/3.

[12] See A/AC.198/2005/3, para. 40.

[13] A/AC.198/2005/2.

[14] A/57/304, annex.

[15] A/AC.198/2002/6, para. 33.

[16] A/AC.198/2005/4.

[17] A/59/373.

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